

Community as contact zone: the power dynamics of community formation on a British Council Estate

Abstract

This paper explores the formation of ‘community’ on a British Council Estate as a process of negotiation enacted within a ‘contact zone’, a social space defined by struggle between different cultural values within asymmetrical relations of power. Building on a discursive turn within theorisations of class, the paper explores the mobilisation of discourses of community as a process of making class on The Estate. Based on ethnographic research, the paper offers an analysis of the field dynamics of the Community Centre, where community is enacted, negotiated, subverted and critiqued. This paper shows how a focus on the dynamic nature of discursive reproduction enacted in everyday negotiations within the ‘contact zone’, moves our understanding beyond structural accounts of class, incorporating agentic responses and everyday resistances into an analysis of the formation of class and community on The Estate.

Key words: Community, Contact Zone, Council Estate, Class

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Introduction: the discursive construction of community

As ‘illusion’ (Brent, 2004), ‘paradox’ (Hill and Wright, 2003) and exclusionary construction (Back 2009), ‘community’ is positioned as an ambivalent concept within class analysis. Nevertheless, in representations of the council estate, community continues to do much of the conceptual work of connecting people and place in understandings of the formation of class. Following the discursive turn within theorisations of class (Reay, 2002; Skeggs, 2014; Hollingworth, 2015), this paper explores the mobilisation of discourses of community as a process of making class on The Estate. Through an analysis of everyday practice within the

Community Centre the paper explores the production and reproduction of dominant discourses of the community within interaction, arguing that knowledge of the community is constructed through the active weaving together of multiple representations (Thornham and Parry, 2014).

The paper develops an analysis of the discursive construction of community by foregrounding the power dynamics which shape the possibility of individuals and institutions accessing repertoires of discourse as a resource (Skeggs, 2005). I argue that power lies in the ability to name, to claim to know and to resist and redefine such positionings (Pelletier, 2012). Discourse is therefore socially produced, in that it is shaped by histories which structure its reproduction, and formed inter-relationally, through the connections between personal and communal narratives (Walkerdine, 2010). The paper aims to deconstruct the ‘authenticity’ of community through an ethnographic analysis of the everyday formation of knowledge of people and place within the Community Centre of one council estate in Britain.

Contemporary re-conceptualizations of community beyond the ‘state/individual axis’ (Studdert and Walkerdine, 2016) conceive community through a ‘relational analytic’ (Walkerdine, 2016), a ‘process of articulation’ (Hall, 1996: 2), never completed, and only ever actualised in the ‘binding and marking of symbolic boundaries’ (1996: 3). As a process of ‘making through marking’ (Skeggs, 2004) community may be understood as ‘defined against and built upon exclusion via the ongoing discursive construction of a “constitutive outside”’ (Lucey, 2010: 3). Such post-structural articulations of community move beyond a relational theorisation, whereby the community defines itself against what it is not, to an understanding that community only ever comes to be in moments of ‘othering’. In this conceptualisation, community is unstable, it is an interruption, constituted in moments of disagreement (Rancière, 1999) where it attempts at ‘being’ other to what it is not.

An exploration of classed subjectivities through post-structural theory is not to move away from class as a structural and therefore material location, but rather, to also recognise that ‘power does not cease at the moment the subject is constituted, but is subjected and produced time and again’ (Butler, 1992: 13). As such, post-structural theory allows for the exploration of the processes through which community is constituted, furthermore, providing space within an analysis for subversion of classifications. Butler notes that ‘identity categories are never merely descriptive, but always normative, and as such, exclusionary’ (1992: 15-16). Therefore,

a deconstruction of the concepts of class and its relationship to community is important in displacing classifications from the ‘contexts in which they have been deployed as instruments of oppressive power’ (1992: 17).

Informed by this ‘post-structural’ conceptualisation of community, the paper applies the concept of ‘contact zone’ to explore everyday encounters where the boundaries between the community and a ‘constitutive outside’ (Lucey, 2010) are drawn, policed and resisted. Drawing upon Pratt’s (1991) notion of ‘contact zone’, I suggest that the Community Centre forms a site of the discursive construction of community, as a social space where ‘cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power’ (Pratt, 1991: 34). Despite this explicit asymmetry of power, the moment of contact is a negotiation, a coming together and grappling between different cultural values (Askins and Pain, 2011). As an encounter with difference (Valentine, 2008), the ‘contact zone’ is a site of the ‘difficult, often halting or tentative work of relating across difference’ (Lawson and Elwood, 2014: 214). Yet, the ‘contact zone’ is a site where difference is neither simply celebrated nor defended, rather boundaries of difference are porous (Pérez Izaguirre, 2015). Thus, in the moment of contact there is space for resistance, agency and disagreement. The mediation of dominant discourses within everyday social interaction opens space for the enactment of dissensus (Rancière, 2003). This dynamic nature of discursive (re)production moves beyond structural accounts, to incorporate agentic responses and everyday resistances. Through an ethnographic analysis, the paper draws attention to the processes which form and regulate normative behaviour and their mediation through everyday practice.

The conceptualisation of ‘contact zone’ within the paper provides an analytic tool with which to explore the everyday production of classed cultural practices. The core contribution of this paper is an analysis of the everyday production of classifications where classed culture is produced through negotiation. Therefore, class production and reproduction are interconnected; each moment within a ‘contact zone’ is a negotiation within asymmetrical power relations, an enactment of agency within structured distributions of power. As performative (Butler, 1988), dominant discourses of community come into being through everyday practices within the Community Centre, a site of ‘tensions, negotiations, values and lived power relations within and between a number of forces and scales’ (Thornham and Parry, 2014).

Methodology

This paper draws upon eighteen months (2013-2014) of ethnographic research conducted on a council estate located on the eastern edge of a city in Britain. The fieldwork was conducted in multiple sites on The Estate, with the Community Centre forming a key space of sustained and intensive participant observation. I gained access to the Community Centre in June 2013 and spent two days a week there until September 2014. During this time, I took on the role of ‘helper’ at youth clubs for primary and secondary school aged children. During the summer months of 2014, I conducted in-depth interviews (two youth worker residents, eight secondary aged and three primary aged) which drew upon a range of methods as appropriate for the participant (Heyl, 2001), including; drawing, playdough modelling, the discussion of photographs and walking conversations.

The ethnographic methodology of the research informs its focus on the production of everyday life. Through an analysis which connects ‘meaning, social structure, power relations and history’ (Lather, 2001: 481) ethnography is a means to pay attention to the ‘livable life’ (Butler and Athanasiou 2013; Back, 2015), enabling an articulation of ‘hidden’ knowledges and resistances, through an interpretation of the ways in which agency produces structure. As an account of processes, ethnography is necessarily conducted across time and space, with the in-depth nature of ethnographic research allowing an exploration of the complexity of individual lives and the intersections of multiple identities (Skeggs, 2001).

The Estate: an architected community

The histories and geographies of council housing in the UK map a process by which classed groups are not simply physically located but socially located (Hanley, 2007). Council estates are founded upon ideals of social housing, characterised by state owned properties with protected tenancies (Minton et al, 2016). For peri-urban estates such as that of this research, geographical dislocation (Featherston, 2013) is mediated by internal service provision. The physical dislocation of The Estate produces a social distancing whereby the ‘proximate stranger’ (Bhabha, 1996) is imagined through repeated cultural representations (Raisborough and Adams, 2008).

“The one thing about this area is most communities you have to go through that community to get to wherever you want to go, but here, where we are, you don’t have to come in here unless you’ve got business in this area. So, people go round it, they don’t see it”

(Interview with Sharon¹, youth worker and resident)

Social housing in the city that is closely integrated with other housing tenures and has better transport links are more comprehensively privatised than The Estate. Consequently, the city’s most available social housing has become concentrated on The Estate, where geographical segregation has maintained a social and physical separateness distinct from other areas of social housing (Jones, 2010; Jeffery, 2016).

“...because of where we are, we got a lot of social housing, lots of flats and lots of social housing. So an example being if you’re a couple living, I don’t know, in the city or some nice area and everything goes to pot and you don’t pay your mortgage, you lose your house and you break up, nine times out of ten, if you lose your home, you get housed here, in The Estate.”

(Interview with Sharon, youth worker and resident)

This construction of being ‘housed’ as a consequence of ‘failure’ signifies The Estate as a position of ‘valuelessness’ (Skeggs, 2004), a process of stigmatisation (Wacquant, 2008), embodied as a ‘psycho-social bruise’ (Hanley, 2007). Therefore, the formation of community on The Estate may be understood as ‘stigma responsive identity work’ (van de Wetering, 2017).

The Community Centre as a contact zone

¹all names have been replaced by pseudonyms



(Photograph by Becky, secondary school aged female)

At the time of the research, the Community Centre was impacted by ‘austerity’ policies, part of a political project to introduce market principles into the provision of social, educational and care services (Lobao et al, 2018). The ‘neoliberalisation’ of the public sector produces a particular atmosphere and sense of the future, whereby the anticipation of funding cuts has tangible consequences on the everyday relationships, spaces and efficacy of service provision (Horton, 2016: 349). Thus, the Community Centre becomes a site of stability and instability in the lives of young people on The Estate:

Lyla: I feel comfortable, like if I didn't then, I don't know, I probably wouldn't come here. But, I feel welcome, if you get what I mean. And even, when Sharon is here, because I've been coming here for a long time, like she like wondered why I don't come here. So then even if, once when I'd had an argument with my Mum, then I still came down here coz I just felt like I could come here whenever I wanted to. And when my brother and my sister was coming here, it was like, it was open every day, like all day, just like open whenever you want, come in whenever you want. And then you could go on the dance mats or game things or anything, it was good then.

(Interview with Lyla, secondary school aged female)

For Lyla, the Community Centre represents her community, it is place where she feels she plays a constituting part, and she would be missed if she were not there. Though Lyla's reflection is grounded in her experiences, the comfort she feels in the Community Centre and the connections she has with the people there, she also links this personal account with a history, that despite not being part of, she feels intimately connected to. It is through drawing upon stories of the Community Centre's past that Lyla constructs her present experience of

feeling *'like I could come here whenever I wanted to'*. Nevertheless, Lyla is concerned about the increased insecurity of the Community Centre and the pressures faced by the youth workers:

Sarah: Why don't you think it's open all the time now?

Lyla: I don't know, Sharon has got a bit older though and she might not be able to handle it all the time. And with what she's going through, it's really bad, I feel sorry for her.

(Interview with Lyla, secondary school aged female)

Lyla's expression of care towards Sharon exemplifies the affective labour necessitated within the contemporary context of austerity (Butler and Athanasiou, 2013). Despite the withdrawal of funding and the scaling back of the provision, through Lyla's re-telling of the Community Centre as a place you can always go, she conceptualises her being part of the 'community' beyond her limited access to the Community Centre, as a 'natural' part of her being in the world.

The Community Centre therefore is a site of the construction of community. The following analysis considers the field dynamics within the Community Centre which produce and reproduce notions of community which often exist in parallel, despite contradictions. I begin with an exploration of moments of community enactment, through an analysis of community consultations, I suggest that an 'authentic' *being* community is placed in tension with an 'active' *doing* community. Developing an analysis of the processes through which ideas of community are legitimised, I draw upon the concept of a 'contact zone' in order to foreground the dynamic power relations which construct and reconstruct discourses of community within the Community Centre.

Being vs. Doing community

The following analysis explores the enactment of community consultations within the Community Centre. This practice marks a disruption of the everyday within the community centre, requiring a stepping away from daily tasks of *being* community and a stepping into a more formalised construction of *doing* community. Here, community consultation is both a time and place of dialogue between service providers and the communities they serve, where

representational participation may achieve consensus across difference (Booth, 2016). Nevertheless, community consultations are not neutral processes (Cameron and Grant-Smith, 2005) and must be located within broader structures of governance (McCareavey, 2009). Specifically, within the context of austerity outlined above, community consultations are increasingly under-resourced, with pressure placed on the time, personal energy and finances of community members (Simpson et al, 2003).

The following analysis considers a moment of community consultation where the women who spend time within the community centre are positioned as *being* the community; at once valued as authentic whilst becoming reified and fixed within the unequal power relations of the consultation.

Robert (community development worker) had come to the Community Centre to have a meeting to consult with parents about something. He did not seem to take into consideration the role the women had in maintaining the Community Centre. He asked them to talk in the office for an hour, which meant they were not able to help with the children.

Amy who has a 14-month old boy was one of the mums and so I was left to “keep an eye” on him – that is along with the 50 odd other kids.

The next time I saw Carly she said it was a waste of time because nothing is ever taken seriously or taken further. She had suggested they take the kids camping in the summer – Robert told her he would leave it with her – she said she had no idea where to start.

Sarah’s fieldnotes, 27th January 2014

The community consultation is founded upon an imagining of an authentic voice from which the community may speak (Cohen, 2000). As such, the women’s presence in the Community Centre is viewed as part of their natural being in the world. The work of the women within the Community Centre is not considered valued work in moments of community consultation: no apologies were made for interrupting the women’s daily tasks and no arrangements were made to cover the work of the women whilst they were taking part. The women’s participation in the Community Centre is not valued as an act, it is conceived only as *being* not as *doing*. In this

way, community consultations are legitimised not only as non-interruptions but as positive interventions which enable the *doing* of community.

The community consultation is one enactment of a ‘contact zone’, a social space where community is performed, negotiated, subverted and critiqued within asymmetrical relations of power (Pratt, 1991). It is a site of struggle for recognition, a space for the subversion and critique of dominant discourses, where difference is ‘troubled and reworked’ (Lawson and Elwood, 2013: 209) rather than simply reproduced. The community consultation was a negotiation between Robert and the women of the Community Centre. Together they carved out a space within which to enact this form of community work, whilst maintaining a distance, preserving cultural distinctions and managing potential conflicts. By *doing* community within moments of community consultation the women protected their space of *being* community, the Community Centre’s daily routines. More than this, the women recognised the potential power of the community consultation and the possibilities it opened up for them to access resources.

The conceptualisation of moments of community consultation as a ‘contact zone’ enables a more complex analysis of the power dynamics at play, moving beyond representational binaries of active / passive, dominant / dominated.

Producing knowledge of the community

Next, I explore how the production of knowledge of the community is constituted within the ‘contact zone’. The fieldnote below provides an account of research conducted within the Community Centre and specifically, the power dynamics forged within the focus group.

The Community Centre was used as a platform for a focus group about parenting issues, part of a city-wide research project funded by the local council.

The main tension within the group was between two mums who live on The Estate, Lauren and Carly, and the focus group facilitator Claire and Robert acting as ‘chair’. This was manifest in the facilitators’ attempts to control/limit/manage the conversations, which often resulted in them shutting down what was being discussed.

One specific issue for Claire was the apparent lack of separation the mothers made between their issues as parents and the needs of their kids. This was highlighted as the wrong thing to talk about: “We are here to discuss parents’ needs”.

Sarah’s fieldnotes, Parenting Debate, 8th July 2013

Official measures of deprivation and social exclusion construct The Estate as a devalued space. This recognition, paradoxically, endows The Estate and therefore its residents with a specific value. This value is contained and limited, it is not a value to be exchanged, rather it is a valuing of, a use value. The form this value takes is an endowment of authenticity by privileged others onto estate residents. The Estate residents are valued in moments of community consultation, where their being on The Estate is imagined as a natural state (Rogaly and Taylor, 2009).

However, community consultations are of course located within the power relations of service provision, interwoven with discourses of what legitimate needs are and who lays claim to them. Thus, community consultation is a highly structured performance, one where problems are identified by external others and interaction with members of the community are controlled and formalised. In the fieldnote above, the problem identified by the local council was a lack of ‘*support, guidance and training*’ for parents. Having identified this as an area of concern the research sought to draw upon the ‘expertise’ of the community through a focus group with parents.

A tension emerged between the focus group facilitators and two women participants. Although the women fitted neatly within the normative construction of parenthood, in that they were the primary carer of dependent children, their expression of parents’ issues was not considered appropriate within the parents’ focus group. Of frustration to the facilitators was the lack of conceptual clarity the women had of parents’ issues, most notably their conflation of children’s issues with parents’ issues. The women’s reflections were interrupted by the need to clarify that this focus group was for the discussion of parents’ issues: “*We are here to discuss parents’ needs*”. These interruptions hung in the air: both sides sighed with the frustration of a fundamental misunderstanding. They were talking across competing and juxtaposed ontologies.

For the women, the focus group presented them with an impossible task, a reimagining of their self as dislocated and disentangled from their children. The facilitators faced not only a

misunderstanding and therefore failing of their focus group, but also the frustrations of an expression of a devalued life (Skeggs, 2011). Their moral position was explicit, the lack of separation the women articulated between their self and their children was both unhealthy and annoyingly unhelpful in their targeted community consultation. The research was founded upon the assumption that parenthood is a relationship between two autonomous individuals, the parent and the child, that each has their individual sense of self and therefore individual needs and wants that can best be supported through separate service provision. Thus, the women's discussion undermined the basic assumptions of the research. Both sides were contained within their ontological understanding of parenthood, unable to comprehend or accept the value of each other's perspective.

It is within these moments of difference that the self is made through processes of relational identity construction (Bourdieu, 1990). However, these momentary exposures do not occur in isolation, they are entangled within histories and processes of domination that reach far beyond the moment of contact. As such, analysis of this interaction requires a bifocality: an analytic interest in the moment of construction in addition to the contexts within which this moment is located and thus interpreted (Weis and Fine, 2012). By this, I mean to highlight the importance of power in the maintenance of structures, whilst allowing the possibility of subversion and resistance in moments of contact.

I felt uncomfortable that the biographical stories the women were sharing were not being valued, and this was something I discussed with Claire after the group ended. She said that this was not what she was looking for and that she really needed a larger group, assuming that this would provide a more "complete"/"true" picture.

Sarah's fieldnotes, Parenting Debate, 8th July 2013

Thinking in this way, the parents focus group may be conceptualised as a moment of encounter within a 'contact zone'. The power dynamic within the group was asymmetrical, with Claire and Robert's 'expert' position signified in their role as facilitator/service provider. Despite the concept of community consultation inferring a valuing of 'authentic' voice, this is only ever within the parameters set by the 'experts'. Thus, the women's reflections on their experiences was not positioned as an alternative perception of parenthood, simply dismissed as an unhelpful conflation of the categories of parent and child. The women were positioned as in deficit, their sense-making was not valued as a representation of alternative ways of being. Rather, they

were assumed to be inarticulate, unable to reflexively present their self, in effect requiring the experts to 'take it from here'. It is through this process of misrecognition that the power, present but not explicit in moments of contact, becomes manifest (Bourdieu, 2000).

In their refusal to talk within the parameters of the focus group, the women resisted the 'experts' gaze and together worked to redefine their sense of self, specifically, their claim that parenthood is a way of being in the world which shapes relationships with others beyond the moments of caring for dependent children. However, the dismissal of this claim by the facilitators of the focus group made clear that these stories would not be taken further. They were confined to the space formed in the moment of contact. Thus, structures are maintained through the production of knowledge enacted in the power to ignore, the power to silence.

Reification and resistance

This section develops an account of 'contact zones' which moves beyond a clash between the 'community' and outside 'others', to explore the Community Centre as a social space where discourses of community are mobilised in encounters where power is not simply top down, but cyclical and diffuse (Skeggs, 2014). The following analysis considers the processes that form and regulate normative behaviour in the practice of sexual health testing at the Community Centre. Through a focus on possibilities of resistance and subversion of dominant representations of the needs of the community (Howarth, 2002; Zirkel et al, 2011), I argue that though agency is bounded by dominant discourses of class and gender, these discursive repertoires may also be drawn upon as resources to resist devalued positionings.

The young people at the Community Centre were being encouraged to take chlamydia tests. Sharon explained to me that 'Sexual Health' had been Dave's role and that since he had left it had come to light that this 'work' had not been 'done'.

Sharon was in the 'living room' of the Community Centre with a group of girls and boys, aged 11-15. She wanted all the young people over 13 years old to take a chlamydia test. The boys were crowded around Sharon as she handed out tumblers for them to wee into. They came back into the room showcasing their product – commenting on its colour and generally joking around.

Sharon said she needed more to take the test and encouraged the young people, reassuring them that the results will be sent to their mobile so no one at home would know about it. A group of older girls, aged 14-15, were much more reluctant to take the test and one girl started to cry. Her friends took her out of the room.

Sarah's fieldnotes, 23rd January 2014

My initial reading of this moment was informed by feminist critiques of the domination of women through the mobilisation of classed and gendered discourses of 'respectability' (Skeggs, 1997; Greene 2006). Normative constructions of respectability function as a tool through which women are 'classified and subjectified' (Phipps, 2009: 673). Locating this ethnographic moment within the context of normative constructions of femininity makes visible the power dynamics shaping action. The implication for the girls was not simply a recognition of sexuality but an entanglement within classed and gendered discourses of promiscuity and the social production of dirt and danger connected to this (Douglas, 1966; Balfe et al, 2010). The boys too made this claim in their taking of the test, yet read within the context of male heterosexuality, their claims to sexual activity are claims to power. Understood within social norms of heterosexual sex responsiblizing women for health and contraception, the active role the boys were taking in 'testing' their sexual health was praised and further connected them with the male heterosexual ideal.

This social context is important, locating the dynamics of the group within broader structures of gendered and classed inequality (Hawkes, 1995; Arai, 2003). However, it was through further conversations with the young people that I better understood the meanings of their actions within this moment:

When Sharon left the room, the young people began talking about the test. A few of the joking boys who had been keen to take the test were laughing, they said they thought it would be funny to take the test, but they weren't worried about it. For them, the test was just a joke, they had never had sex.

The older girls came back into the room and sat together, protective of their friend, whose eyes were still puffy from her tears. They listened to the conversation and appeared uncomfortable with the younger kids' discussion. One girl was particularly

angered: "I'm not stupid. If I needed to do a chlamydia test I would go to the Sexual Health Clinic".

Sarah's fieldnotes, 23rd January 2014

The joking boys, who appeared to revel in their sexual prowess, a confidence I felt as a claim to power and located within a history of male domination, later explained their position as one of ignorance. The boys were not only distanced from the shame associated with the devaluing of young, working-class female bodies as hyper-sexual (Loveday, 2016). They were also distanced from male heterosexuality: they were virgins. Thus, although their position within a context of male heterosexuality legitimised a space within which they could play with representations of sexuality without the stigma associated with female sexuality, this does not capture the complexity of their position (Coston and Kimmel, 2012). Perhaps because of their distance from the act of sex, the boys were able to suspend the values attached to their taking of the test and formulate their own meaning, a counter-discourse which may in some way disrupt the dominant discourse of top down sexual health services.

In a similar vein, the older girls' may be understood both as located within histories of working-class female oppression whilst demonstrating a level of agency in their refusal to act. The girls' reflection on this moment highlights the ways in which their distancing from overt sex talk was not founded in ignorance, as the boys' participation was, rather in knowledge and experience. This is not to deny that their experience of this moment is located within classed, gendered and heteronormative constructions of sexuality, rather it is to provide space for resistance of these constructions. The girls resisted their positioning as in need of sexual health tests, not on the basis that they were ignorant but rather that they were informed and capable of accessing services beyond the Community Centre. For them the utilisation of the Community Centre to access them as a perceived vulnerable group was insulting. In this way, the group of joking boys and older girls resisted and subverted dominant discourses which position young people on The Estate as sexually deviant (Mckenzie, 2015).

The provision of chlamydia testing for young people at the Community Centre may be founded on an actual or imagined need. However, it was the structuring of the provision, which set targets for the Community Centre to ensure all young people are tested, which worked to fix and reify the young people as a deviant sexual group. The de-legitimation of the young people's sexual identity within dominant discourse was refigured within this moment at the Community

Centre, through an attempt to suspend the values attributed to taking the test in Sharon's need to just get it 'done'. Thus, the young people were positioned in tension between an awareness of dominant discourses surrounding the taking of chlamydia tests and their affective and social connections with Sharon. The entanglement of this service with Sharon resulted in a pressure to simply do it, for her. Nevertheless, the Community Centre is a space within which young people's sexual activity continues to be understood within discourses of risk and danger (Green and Singleton, 2006). Therefore, the only legitimate motivation for taking the test was for Sharon, taking the test as an aspect of being sexually active remained taboo, resulting in the exclusion of the older girls.

However, there was agency in the girls' behaviour. They were critical of the imposition of this service upon them and of Sharon's role within this. They resisted their positioning as young working-class females in its entanglement with notions of ignorance and naivety, particularly pushing against this homogenising categorisation, making clear their perceived distinction from the other young people, who were both 'too young' and inexperienced. Through their claim that they would go to the Sexual Health Clinic if they needed to take a chlamydia test, the girls resisted the intrusion of these services in the Community Centre and its implied simplification of their identity; they could be both young people living on The Estate, part of the Community Centre and responsible individuals enacting 'safe sex' through accessing the Sexual Health Clinic.

The girls' behaviour makes evident their critical opposition to being defined as in need of enforced sexual health screening. Through their refusal to take the test, the girls resist their positioning within dominant discourses of 'risk'. Nevertheless, the potential of their resistance is located within localised discourses where sexual activity is stigmatised, in this way, their refusal feeds back into discourses of respectability. Analysis of everyday encounters within the 'contact zone' foregrounds the process through which normative values are (re)produced. Therefore, the community is socially constructed through discourses which fix and reify through definitions of 'need', mediated at the site of the Community Centre with more localised understandings.

Conclusion

This paper has developed a conceptualisation of community as a dynamic discursive 'structuring structure' (Bourdieu, 2005), formed within everyday power relations on The Estate. Outlining a 'post-structural' theorisation (Butler, 1992; Walkerdine, 2010), the paper has offered a deconstruction of community, through an account of the processes whereby boundaries between the community and a 'constitutive outside' (Lucey, 2010) are drawn, policed and resisted. Developing the concept of 'contact zone' (Pratt, 1991) the paper therefore contributes to the study of class and community through its exploration of the Community Centre as a 'contested site' (Thornham and Parry, 2014), foregrounding everyday negotiations which occur within asymmetrical power relations. As such, new meanings are formed within moments of negotiation within the 'contact zone'. This is not to suggest that the localised values of the Community Centre are in opposition to dominant discourses, they are necessarily shaped by them and often reproduce them. However, the mediation of dominant discourses through localised value systems does produce some space within which to critically reflect on the assumptions informing top-down initiatives which are founded upon particular notions of community.

Ethnographic analysis of the field dynamics within the Community Centre illustrate the making of community through processes of classification, where dominant discourses are formed and reformed as a resource through which value is produced. This paper shows how a focus on the dynamic nature of discursive reproduction enacted in everyday negotiations within the 'contact zone', moves our understandings beyond structural accounts of class, incorporating agentic responses and everyday resistances into an analysis of the formation of class and community on The Estate.

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